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It is probable that this classification, the vehicle of which appeared to be a policy more liberal than any previous Chinese policy toward minorities, represented an attempt at cautious partial imitation of the Soviet minority policy. The imitation, however, did not go very far. Sheng Shih-ts'ai, as his subsequent history shows, was by no means a slavish follower of the Soviet Union or its ideas. The sole emphasis in his program was on promoting the culture of the minority peoples, a policy which permitted cultural autonomy but carefully stopped short of territorial or political autonomy. Indeed it would appear, especially in view of Sheng's administrative gerrymandering of the province, that his purpose was to manipulate the national classifications which he recognized in such a way as to strengthen the dominant position of the Chinese minority in the province. General Sheng's classification was in fact influenced by political criteria which if not precisely scientific are at least as old as the earliest empire.

The program promoted by Sheng Shih-ts'ai was in large measure taken over by Chang Chih-chung when he in turn became head of the province. Like his predecessor, Chang was most active in stressing the cultural differences among the fourteen peoples of Sinkiang. Unlike the extreme authoritarians of the C.C. Clique, he appeared to concede that the different peoples of Sinkiang, rather than such administrative units as the counties, should provide the basis of self-rule. "The administration of Sinkiang," he says, "should be entrusted to the various racial groups and should function under the guidance of the many national leaders of the province." [11] This formula, however, glosses over the fact that the administrative divisions of Sinkiang do not coincide with the distribution of "the various racial groups." Further limitations on the right of self-rule are indicated by the following:

> The Central Government is willing to surrender all political power to the people of Sinkiang on condition that the

[11] Chang Chih-chung, "Dilemma in Sinkiang," *Pacific Affairs*, XX, New York, 1947, p. 426.

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the coalition, emphasize convergent interests and avoid emphasis on divergent interests. The coalition breaks up when one of its component groups has secured the interest that it thinks most essential, and is unwilling to risk this gain by pushing ahead in support of interests more essential to other groups. New coalitions then form, grouped on the one hand around those who wish to stabilize the situation and on the other hand around those who still have unsatisfied interests to assert.

Sheng Shih-ts'ai, in the first phase of his rule, achieved considerable success by building around himself a left-of-center coalition of progressive, radical, and Communist Chinese — together with non-Chinese leaders, to whom he granted more freedom of political action than had ever been granted by any previous Chinese Governor. In the second phase of his rule he tried, and eventually failed, to build a new right-of-center coalition by combining representatives of the Kuomintang, freshly sent in from China, with those of his own followers whom he considered personally loyal to himself rather than to political principles.

After the fall of Sheng and the end of the war with Japan, different factions of the Kuomintang, frequently weakened by purely factional quarrels with each other, formed a series of unsteady coalitions in which they enlisted representatives of the most conservative interests among the non-Chinese, especially the Uighurs and Kazakhs. These Chinese-controlled coalitions were opposed by the Kulja coalition in the Ili Valley and western Jungaria, which rested on leftist and pro-Communist groups among the non-Chinese nationalities, but at the same time sought to maintain contact with moderate representatives, such as Chang Chih-chung, within the right-wing coalition which dominated most of the Tarim Basin and eastern Jungaria.

The Kuomintang, the Chinese Communists, and the Russian Frontier

In coalition politics of this kind the shifts of allegiance of Osman Bator, the freebooting Kazakh leader, who has been fre-

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175 quently interviewed by American correspondents, were typical. First, as a military leader with an independent following, he 662 sought to take advantage of Chinese military weakness by joining the Ili coalition. Later, failing to dominate the Ili coalition, he went over to the Chinese side, where by this time his price had risen because popular sympathy was turning away from the conservative Uighur and other leaders who had accepted Chinese protection.

During this phase of Sinkiang politics the Ili coalition, holding territory along the Soviet frontier, received aid and comfort from Soviet Kazakhstan. The coalition of Kuomintang officials and generals, conservative Uighur figureheads supported by the Kuomintang, and Kazakh auxiliaries received subsidies and American arms from the American-supported government at Nanking. This phase ended when the advances of the Chinese Communist armies across the Yangtze cut off the Kuomintang outposts in Sinkiang from any hope of support from within China.

175 An entirely new situation was thus created. Ever since the Rus-
563 sian Revolution, the non-Chinese peoples of Sinkiang had stood
648 between a government controlled by Russian Communists on the one side and a government controlled by non-Communist or anti-Communist Chinese on the other side. They now stand between a government controlled by Russian Communists and a government dominated by Chinese Communists.

In this new situation the aims of the Russian Communists and the Chinese Communists, as Marxists, are generally the same; but the domestic interests of the Chinese Republic and the Soviet Union are not necessarily identical. In the Soviet Union the Russians are the dominant people; but there are vast territories inhabited by many millions of people who are not Russians. In the Chinese Republic the Chinese people are the overwhelming majority; they dominate China much more decisively than the Russians dominate the Soviet Union; but in the Chinese Republic also there are vast territories inhabited by peoples who are not Chinese. The geographical center of gravity of the non-Chinese territories of China lies in Sinkiang. The frontiers of Sinkiang